

Documents

The Church and the Law in Hungary

On 14 March 1988 the newly appointed Prime Minister of Hungary, Károly Grósz, bypassed the usual channel of communication between the churches and the government — i.e., the State Office for Church Affairs — and met face to face with the country's religious leaders. On the previous day the government had committed itself to introduce a new law on religion by 1990, and Grósz wanted to gain a first-hand knowledge of the attitude of the churches towards the state and their terms for more actively supporting the government's perestroika programme. The Prime Minister's active participation in the meeting underlines the importance the government attaches to the churches' support for the creation of a new national consensus at a time of declining public confidence in the authorities.*

The contributions of the non-Catholic leaders at the 14 March meeting fit the pattern of 'glasnost' church-state discussions when state-approved representatives of the churches would express willingness to cooperate with the government, and perhaps ask for minor concessions in return. For example, the Lutheran Bishop Gyula Nagy asked for more moral education in

state schools and for clarification of the impact of new tax laws on the churches; the Reformed Bishop Károly Tóth requested approval for the re-establishment of a grammar school and televised church services at major festivals; the Orthodox Dean Feriz Berki asked for help with the restoration of the Petőfi Square church.

It was left to Hungary's Catholic Bishops to ask for what the Catholic weekly Új Ember called a new system of institutions for regulating church-state relations. Archbishop László Paskai began by asking the government to allow Catholic conscientious objectors to military service the right to opt for unarmed alternative service instead of gaol. Bishop József Szendi of Veszprém said that the church wants a new agreement with the state to replace that of 1950, which forms the legal basis for relations between the state and the Catholic Church. Among Szendi's other requests were the re-establishment of dissolved religious orders and permission for the church to operate freely outside church premises. Bishop Gyulay of Szeged also added his voice to the calls for reform when he asked the government to remove what he called 'certain bureaucratic elements' from the day to day relations between church and state — a reference to the

*See RCL Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 166-67.

regulation of church life by the State Office for Church Affairs.

The outspokenness of the Catholic Bishops, especially Szendi and Gyulay produced dismay at the State Office for Church Affairs. On 17 July, during celebrations in Esztergom to mark Archbishop Paskai's elevation to the office of Cardinal, Imre Miklós the Chairman of the State Office for Church Affairs made what senior Hungarian Catholics understood as a thinly veiled attack on these two bishops. According to Új Ember, Miklós said: 'Some people, motivated by different factors, write and make declarations unthinkingly, and they call into question those realities which Pope Paul VI and János Kádár confirmed during their meeting in 1967.' However, Miklós went on to say that the government is ready to meet the 'legitimate demands' of the church.

Within a fortnight of his speech at Esztergom Miklós sent to the church leaders copies of the Prime Minister's answers to the questions raised at the 14 March meeting.

Below we publish the full text of Bishop Szendi's speech, the Prime Minister's reply to the church leaders, and a Protocol between the Catholic Bishops Conference and the Hungarian government regarding religious instruction, which resulted from the 14 March meeting. We also publish the official proposals of the Catholic Bishops' Conference regarding the new law on religious affairs. This proposal was submitted to the State Office for Church Affairs, which has the responsibility for ascertaining the views of the various churches, and representing them to the government's drafting committee.

Bishop Szendi of Veszprem

Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for the invitation to this meeting. It shows that you honour the bishops with your trust, and that you wish to share your concerns with us and ensure an opportunity for fruitful cooperation.

However, in order to rule out once and for all those events of the past, already regarded by everyone as deplorable, I would like to request that a new agreement on church-state relations be incorporated into the constitution and be given the force of law, and one which will not be signed on the part of the Catholic Church by an intimidated archbishop of Kalocsa. . . I would like to stress that the church is not asking for any privileges, but asks for legal anchorage of those human rights which guarantee it security and peace, so that free from any hindrances, it can be an

effective partner to the organs of state in the service we wish to render for the good of our land and people.

We are aware of the troubles of our country. They include the sick, the physically and mentally handicapped, the problems of youth, alcoholism, drug addiction, the suicide rate, broken marriages. I can offer the work of our orders to solve these problems. The experiences of the orders down through the ages, are sufficient proof of how effective and beneficial their work is in helping to solve these problems. When today, in the course of *perestroika*, *glasnost*' and destalinisation, so many are being rehabilitated, why is there hesitation over the rehabilitation of our orders which were abolished in 1950? When it is often admitted on radio and television, that the breaking up of these orders was shameful

and inhumane, why let it rest at just establishing this fact? Why is nothing done to correct the injustice? If this step is not taken the expression of regret is nothing but hypocrisy.

If in our country it is even possible for homosexuals to apply to form an association, in which, in groups, they can follow their unnatural inclinations, then I ask, why is an international affair made out of the fact that some men and women live and pray in religious communities, that in simple, poverty, chastity and renunciation of family life, they want to devote their gifts and their work to the great family of the Hungarian people? The parish clergy are not able to deal effectively with the problems I have outlined. Members of the religious orders, however, even 38 years after their abolition, would still be in a position today to render many a good service, if the re-establishment of the orders was made possible. Prime Minister, I ask you to do your utmost to make possible the freedom of our church to operate not only inside the church buildings, but also outside. Do not be afraid of us, we want to serve the good of our people, not with weapons or with might, but solely by the power of the Spirit and love.

I would also like to request that the church be allowed a free hand to conduct its youth work. We ask that the registration procedures for religious instruction [in the parishes — *Ed.*] be put aside, and we also ask to be able to use our discretion to give the appropriate help where necessary. We ask for permission to form youth groups, which can be allowed to meet and distribute literature. We ask that none who lets his child undergo religious instruction should fear any prejudice against them.

It is regrettable, that state institutions will grant financial support only for a wedding or a funeral, when those concerned do without a

church ceremony. We request that church schools be allowed to enlarge their classes when need arises due to the number of applications.

We request that the press, the radio and the television provide suitable programmes for the religious sector of the population, and also grant the church the opportunity to refute malicious, mistaken or false statements made in the mass media. The churches need both the appropriate publicity as well as the opportunity to do this.

I would also like to request that the state stops promoting the peace gatherings of the priests' peace movement. These assemblies count officially as 'informative conferences'. Now it can clearly be seen that no more information can be learned from them, than from the mass media. The apparent fact that what an unskilled worker can discover from radio, press and television, has to be told over again to the priests, who have higher education, with the resultant waste of time and money, is humiliating. And all this just at a time when we need to be most careful with time and money.

Therefore, I ask you to invite us to take part in discussions about the poor, the unemployed, the destitute and suffering, because, in my opinion, this, rather than clever 'peace-work', is the work of the priests. We must also be allowed to have free access to hospitals, old peoples' homes, reformatories and prisons, so that by means of spiritual conversation and careful administration of the sacraments we can help people find peace with God and themselves.

Dear Prime Minister,

In your invitation you asked me for my opinion and suggestions. I have outlined them here, frankly and without fear, because your statements in the mass media have awakened in me a sense of fellow feeling and trust towards you. There-

fore I hope you do not interpret what I have to say as negative criticism, but rather as constructive suggestions, motivated by a readiness to help. I therefore present them to you in the full trust that they will help you

in the decisions you have to make in the interests of our land and people. I offer you sincere regards.

Budapest. Parliament. 14.3.88

Prime Minister Grósz

I. Answers to the questions raised by the church leaders

To Cardinal Paskai, Primate and Archbishop of Esztergom:

1. The expansion of the Catholic Church's youth work can, with the knowledge of concrete and real needs, be achieved through talks.

2. We agree that only a church that is capable of functioning can fruitfully assist the realisation of our social objectives. It has been our aim that this capability should exist. The new law on religion under preparation — we are counting on the churches' involvement in this preparatory stage — will define the position, role, rights and duties of the churches (denominations) in our society according to the requirements of the times and the social situation. In the meantime together we are searching for opportunities to raise cooperation to a higher level.

3. For the visit of Pope John Paul II to the Burgenland [eastern Austria — *Ed.*] we ensured trouble-free border crossings for the outward bound Hungarian pilgrims.

4. On the possibility of introducing alternative military service, we have been examining the matter with the ministries involved, and have been working on suitable solutions. We hope that a satisfactory solution will be introduced in 1989.

5. In the field of press and book

publishing, we are examining, in the full knowledge of concrete proposals, the broadening of the churches opportunities here. The legislation relating to tax does not permit the relief requested. In order to ease the increase in expenditure arising from the new tax system we have increased the amount of state aid. We plan to raise this sum in the coming year, in so far as this is possible.

6. We agree that the regulatory system defining relations between state and church must be rethought. It is expedient for restriction to give way to a strengthening of regulation, and this is our aim too. In the preparation of the new law on religion we are giving essential consideration to the legal guarantees for the churches' autonomous operation.

To Endre Gyulay, the Diocesan Bishop of Szeged-Csanad:

1. The re-examination of the Family Law and related legislation is — from the point of view of its effectiveness in terms of its social purpose — a continuous process. We consider the family the basic unit of society, and its protection is, like the halting of the demographic decline, our task. We take the view that the alleviation of the generating causes cannot be replaced by the tightening of legislation. We offer the churches, among other things, broader cooperation in

protecting the family.

2. Under the constitution of the Hungarian People's Republic citizens in our country enjoy equal rights, and the law strictly punishes any discrimination on religious grounds. Consequently a teacher cannot suffer any disadvantage on account of his or her religious conviction. (We will continue — as hitherto — to examine consistently any infringements of the law that may occur, and will take the necessary measures.) Under the new Service Regulations of the Hungarian Army those fulfilling military service may — when on leave — take part in religious gatherings in civilian dress.

3. No state permit will be required in future for the reproduction of circulars from church leaders and administration (periodical official publications). The right and responsibility for this reside with the church leader. Amendment of the need for prior state consent in the filling of church appointments is only possible through changes in legislation. The new law on religion will, as we conceive it, narrow the number of church offices that require prior consent.

To Dr József Szendi, Diocesan Bishop of Veszprém

1. The new law on religion will define the position, role, rights and duties of the churches (denominations) in our society according to the requirements of the social situation and the times.

2. The rehabilitation of the religious orders dissolved in 1950, or the re-granting of permission for their operation, does not feature among the questions waiting to be solved in the near future. The real needs of society and the church today, rather than efforts to recreate the situation of four decades previously, will form the basis of our discussions on the religious orders, as was true when permission was granted for a new

women's religious order.

3. It is a recognised fact both nationally and internationally that for decades the churches in our country have been able to operate freely even outside church buildings within the framework of the law.

4. As a result of previously commenced talks, special permission will not be needed — as was hitherto the case — to set up new parallel classes within the existing framework in secondary schools. We also plan to end the fixing of limits on numbers.

5. Radio, television, and the national and local press will take into account — as far as is possible — the needs of religious people. The task of the church press will continue to be to meet the devotional needs of these people.

6. In proceedings for corrections of the press every church body, or individual, has the same rights as any other Hungarian citizen.

7. Participation in the church peace movement and in peace meetings is voluntary, and serves to inform priests. The leading bodies of the movement decide the peace meetings' agendas themselves. To our knowledge the revival of these meetings and their further development... are on the agenda.

8. Spiritual discussions and the administration of the sacraments in hospitals and old people's homes are — with due regard for the rules of these institutions — guaranteed. As far as reformatories and prisons are concerned, the principles of reform and penal enforcement and the legal regulation of these do not allow visits at present. Nonetheless we are looking for a solution with the help of the organisations involved.

To Dr Gyula Nagy, Bishop-President of the Hungarian Lutheran Church:

On the basis of Law No. 6, (1987) when the tax was established the sum

spent on the endowment (PTK 74/A-74/E) as well as covenant pledges of public interest (PTK 593-596) can be deducted from the total income. In the same way this regulation refers to donations to church aims of public interest, and to endowments of a similar kind.

To Bishop Károly Tóth, President of the Reformed Church Synod:

1. If the relevant leading body of the Reformed Church makes a request to the Government for the establishment of a second Reformed Church secondary school, and if the material and personnel for the commencement and future management of teaching are guaranteed, we are ready for a solution.

2. We are examining whether the Hungarian TV Company might broadcast church services several times a year on major church feast days — mindful of equality between the denominations.

To Dr Feriz Berki, Administrative Dean of the Hungarian Orthodox Church:

We have begun to assess claims concerning the renovation of the Petöfi Square church. We guarantee as much support as we can in the future.

To Pál Ardeleán, Vicar of the Hungarian Romanian Orthodox Church:

1. When the circumstances for the establishment of a Greek-Orthodox Romanian church collection are fully outlined, the State Office for Church Affairs and the Békés County Council will examine how they can assist its realisation.

2. We consider it justified for the priests of the Greek-Orthodox Romanian Church to be entitled to pensions. The Church should take the necessary steps.

II. Measures of Church Policy Envisaged on the Basis of Preliminary Discussions

Religious Instruction

1. Modification of the state law governing religious instruction in schools, taking into account church needs, is in progress.

2. In religious instruction in churches we are ending maximum limits on the number of age-groups, as well as the designation of Sunday as the day of instruction. The duty of notification applies only to the time of instruction.

3. For church (i.e. congregation-based) religious instruction taking place in the parish (i.e. parish house) only the permission of the diocesan bishop responsible is required. The duty of notification applies merely to the time of instruction.

4. For church diocesan youth retreats, we ask only for the year's programme of retreats from the churches — for information purposes.

Religious Orders and Catholic Secondary Schools

1. Secondary school teachers no longer have to ask annually for permission to teach: permission remains valid until withdrawn.

2. We are making it possible for members of technical staff assisting in religious order schools and colleges — who have until now been lay staff — to join the religious order, or to be members of the order.

3. With regard to Catholic secondary schools and colleges, we are permitting new classes to be formed in existing years; we are ending the fixing of school and college teacher numbers, as well as that of the college pupils. Furthermore we are ending the limit on the number of religious order members needed for teaching and on the number of students needed to replace them.

4. We are permitting the Piarist Theological School to move to a new building in Budapest.

5. We are allowing a study house to be set up within the framework of the Catholic Church where former members of the Cistercian order can help in the training of Catholic priests.

6. For the import of gifts from abroad — excluding what is laid down in the existing state regulations — prior consent in principle will not be required from the State Office for Church Affairs.

7. Easter and Corpus Christi processions can be held on routes that are suitable in terms of local circumstances and road safety. We are ending the time restrictions, but notification remains obligatory.

8. The holders of church posts will continue to take the state oath after their appointment (or commissioning or election). After appointment to a higher office they need only take a new oath if they are elected as national church (denomination) leader, or enter any office appointment which requires the prior consent of the Presidential Council of the People's Republic.

9. We are declaring invalid Decree 27-3/1970 of the Chairman of the State Office for Church Affairs; in the future, measures related to church building work will be governed by agreements to be made between the State Office for Church Affairs and the churches.

For measures that require alteration of decrees of the State Secretary

(i.e. Chairman of the State Office for Church Affairs — *Ed.*) or of protocols, instead of making alterations, a protocol should be drawn up between the State Office for Church Affairs and the Hungarian churches (denominations) which lays down that, in the interests of ensuring a more flexible practice, the parties concerned may deviate from the original decrees or protocols — while these remain valid until the new law on religion is passed — in areas defined by the protocol.

These are: a. Certain clauses of the regulations regarding religious instruction in church buildings. (Decree 1/1974 of the Chairman of the State Office for Church Affairs).

b. Certain elements of the regulations regarding religious instruction in vicarages and presbyteries (Protocols of 1983 and 1987).

c. The admission of individuals not employed in teaching to religious orders (Protocol of 7 September 1950 entitled 'On the agreement between the VKM [Ministry of Religion and Culture] and representatives of the Catholic Church on schools to be handed back to the Church').

d. The number of pupils, educationists, and religious order members (the same Protocol as in point 'c').

e. The taking of the state oath by church (lay) personnel (Decree 1/1971 of the Chairman of the State Office for Church Affairs).

Besides the annulment of the above mentioned Decree 27-3/1970 of the Chairman of the State Office for Church Affairs — not included in the previous points — it is necessary to establish an agreement between the State Office for Church Affairs and the Hungarian churches (denominations) on the regulation of certain questions related to church building work and the sale of property in church hands.

Protocol

which was drawn up between the State Office for Church Affairs and the Hungarian Catholic Bishops' Conference in Budapest on 28 October 1988.

An agreement has been reached which allows the parties concerned to deviate from the clauses of the decrees of the State Secretary [Chairman of the State Office for Church Affairs — *Ed.*] and Protocols enumerated below until the passage of the new law on freedom of conscience and religious practice.

1. Deviating from clauses in Decree 1/1974 of the Chairman of the State Office for Church Affairs, the maximum limit on the number of age-groups and the designation of Sunday as the day of instruction are no longer valid. The obligation of notification applies only to the time of instruction.

2. Deviating from clauses in the Protocol of 1983 on the introduction and regulation of presbytery religious instruction, only permission from the relevant diocesan bishop is required for such instruction. The duty of notification now stands as in point 1.

3. Regarding clauses of the Protocol of 7 September 1950 entitled 'The agreement between the VKM (Ministry of Religion and Culture — *Ed.*) and representatives of the Catholic Church on schools to be handed back to the Church' the parties agreed on the following:

- a. Secondary school teachers' permission to work/teach is valid until withdrawn.
- b. Members of technical staff assisting in religious order schools and

colleges may be members of the order or may join the order.

c. It is the task of the Hungarian Catholic Bishops' Conference and the relevant religious order to see to: the formation of parallel classes in Catholic secondary schools, the level of school and college staff numbers and that of college pupils, and the determination of the number of religious order members needed for teaching and the number of students necessary to ensure their replacement. They are to take into account the demands and the opportunities, and keep the State Office for Church Affairs informed.

4. Under Decree 1/1971 of the Chairman of the State Office for Church Affairs regarding the swearing of the state oath by clerical (and lay) personnel the holders of church posts will continue to take the state oath after their appointment (or commissioning or election). The taking of a further oath after appointment to a higher post is necessary only for those church posts requiring the prior consent of the Presidential Council of the Hungarian People's Republic.

Budapest 28 October, 1988

Imre Miklós
State Secretary
Chairman of the State Office for
Church Affairs

Dr László Paskai
Cardinal, Primate, Archbishop
of Esztergom, Chairman of the
Hungarian Bishops' Conference

Comments of the Roman Catholic Church on the New Law on Religion

1. *General Comments*

The law should be of a regulatory rather than restrictive nature. The law should guarantee the Catholic Church's ability to function as its inner nature demands. For only thus is it capable of taking an effective role as a constructive part of society.

Public opinion not only knows about the new law on religion, but watches with great interest. In the way that has become standard this draft law should likewise be openly debated. It would also surely be beneficial if the relevant Vatican bodies were made acquainted with the draft law and could contribute to the debate.

2. *Religious freedom*

The Hungarian People's Republic guarantees the freedom of conscience of its citizens, and their right to practise religion freely. Para. 63 of the Constitution of the Hungarian People's Republic.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change one's religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest one's religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance. (Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.) No-one should be subject to coercion which would restrict them in their belief, religion, or freedom of religion, or which would lead to the changing of their belief. (This also applies to young people in schools and to citizens fulfilling military service.)

No advantage or disadvantage may arise, either in public life or in the workplace, from religious conviction or from the practice of religion.

No-one may be compelled under

threat of the consequences to act contrary to their objective duty or to their conscience according to official church teaching (e.g. performing abortions).

Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education to be given to their children. (Art. 26 Part 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). The parents, parent, or guardian, have the right to decide whether their child will have religious education.

In education involving pupils of different religions or beliefs the belief or religion of the individual must be respected; no discrimination may be practised on this account, and no pressure may be exercised to change belief or religion. (The exclusion of the so-called 'double education'.)

Religious freedom may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law which are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

Anyone who acts against religious freedom should be punishable as prescribed by the law.

Reason: In theory the constitution and the law have always guaranteed religious freedom. However, contrary administrative measures or, indeed, abuses have occurred, and the memory of these lives on. For this very reason the law needs to define religious freedom more fully. But then the right to religious freedom forms the basis of the whole law on religion.

3. *The Legal Position of the Church*

The church is a legal entity. Institutions which church law holds to be a legal entity within the church are qualified as legal entities.

Since the church and its establishments are internationally connected,

they may freely maintain contact with their church leaders and follow their instructions and orders in church life.

Legal entities of the church possess both moveable and real estate. They may dispose of or procure these within their own sphere of authority in accordance with the legal regulations.

They handle their financial possessions according to their own regulations, with regard to the valid state laws where the handling of finance concerns the spheres of state or society.

On finances, an essential source of church income is the donations of believers. Therefore they may accept voluntary donations in organised form (the so-called church tax, the fixed sum of which may be decided by the church itself). For this purpose it may employ and pay collectors who are officially commissioned and are bound to render a full account.

Since the church depends upon donations, it comes under the same category, from the financial point of view, as state social institutions. This applies to inheritance (the calculation of the bequest transfer percentage), to the tax system recently introduced, to the claiming back of the AFA, and to the fixing of different charges (e.g. for electricity and gas).

In so far as a church institution serves a social need (church schools or a church social institution), it enjoys the same state support as other state establishments. (Teachers' pay in schools, matching the type of school, employees' pay, the maintenance of schools and social institutions, etc.) In support of this claim is the fact that people with qualifications equal to those found in state establishments/institutions carry out socially necessary work, and to this extent relieve the state organs. Fairness demands that the maintenance of these establishments features in

the state budget.

Reason: since the legal position of the churches has not hitherto been defined, it is necessary for their position to be legally established.

4. Operational Regulations

The operational regulations of the Catholic Church consist of the general regulations of the Catholic Church (primarily the Church Code/ Statute Book which is in force) and the detailed national rules that are valid (the cantor regulations, those on assistants to the priest, funeral regulations, birth registration regulation, etc.).

The church carries out its work with the help both of clergymen (ordained priests) and members of religious orders, pastoral assistants, and other workers. The clergymen count as church personnel and the rules regarding church personnel apply to them. Their conditions of employment and their social security are in accordance with those rules.

The church maintains institutions of higher education and preparatory institutes within its own sphere of competence for the education of the clergy, pastoral assistants, monks and nuns.

The pastoral assistants and other workers have conditions of employment set down in contracts. They pay the different contributions (for example, social security and pensions contributions) in a similar way to secular workers, and as a result they are entitled to social security and pensions. The responsible head of each diocese takes responsibility for granting or, when justified, withdrawing the work permits of the clergy and pastoral assistants.

The state authority can withdraw work permits in cases determined by statute law or in the event of court proceedings. It is obliged to justify this to the responsible head of the diocese or consult with him beforehand.

The responsible head of the diocese takes responsibility for deciding the nature of the work and the positions of the clergy and the pastoral assistants without the prior approval of the state.

5. *The Church's Field of Endeavour*

The celebration of mass, the teaching of the faith and contact with the faithful belong first and foremost to the church's field of endeavour. All of this (for example, marriage guidance and instruction for baptism) takes place in churches and other parish buildings. Other locations may be designated for these according to the valid rules of the church with the permission of the responsible head of the diocese.

The clergy and pastoral assistants may have contact freely with the faithful. They may visit them in their homes, and, if they wish, in hospitals without conditions of principle. In the same way their visits to prisons and old people's homes are also possible without stipulations of principle or restriction, if they so demand.

Religious Instruction. All children may participate in religious instruction on the basis of the decision of the parent or guardian. Religious instruction takes place in school or in church (in parish buildings).

A parent or one of the guardians, personally or in writing, enrolls his or her child for religious instruction in schools. A statement once given is valid until it is retracted. Therefore special enrolment for religious instruction is not required each year. A request for instruction in the faith may be made at the time of enrolment in the school. Whenever this does not take place special enrolment for religious instruction as well as an additional registration must be held, the time of which must be made known in an appropriate way.

Religious instruction may be held in every kind of school on the basis of enrolment.

The church decides the conditions of participation in religious instruction held in churches (or parish buildings). The clergymen may create the number of classes that correspond to demand, according to the number of those in attendance.

The responsible head of each diocese, personally or through his commissioner, supervises all religious instruction in schools or in churches. Similarly he determines the curriculum, the text books and teaching aids.

The responsible head of the diocese gives authority for teaching religious instruction in schools and churches according to the regulations of the church. The authority once given is valid until withdrawn. Therefore the reporting of the religious instruction teacher in schools is not required, if there has been no change. The school may reject the nominated teacher if he or she does not meet the conditions laid down in the law or commits any offence which under the regulations laid down for schools entails dismissal.

Catholic Schools. The church in principle has the right to teach and educate in all types of school (nurseries, general schools, the various kinds of secondary schools, colleges, orphanages, etc.).

Recommendations concerning the Catholic schools are contained in a separate appendix.

Charitable Institutions. The church has the right to maintain various charitable institutions, and to undertake work in these places (to run homes for the elderly, care for the sick and injured, undertake hospital care, etc.).

Associations, Societies and Communities. The church may establish associations and societies in order to assist its ability to function. The responsible head of the respective diocese or the Bishops' Conference grants permission for these groups to



Prayer house of the Evangelical Christian-Baptists in Karaganda.
The inscription reads 'I will listen to what the Lord God says'.

German Christians in Karaganda.

See article on pp. 19-33.

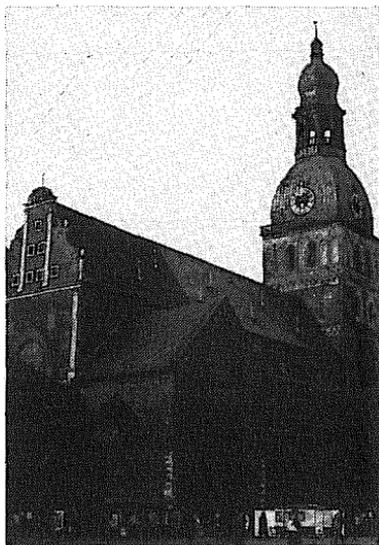
(Photos courtesy Gerd Stricker, Glaube in der 2 Welt.)

Music group of the German Mennonite congregation
of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists in Karaganda.





The Freedom Monument in Riga. At the foot of the monument signatures are being collected to a petition for a memorial to the victims of Stalinism.



The Dome Cathedral, Riga. On 9 October 1988 the Latvian Popular Front were able to hold a service in this former Lutheran Cathedral, now used as a concert hall.

See Document on pp. 82-86.
(Photos courtesy Keston College)



A Sunday service in Vientiane, Laos.
See *Chronicle* item on pp. 66-69.
(Photo © Christian Conference of Asia)

operate.

They also approve the rules, operational methods and aims of the associations and societies. Taking into account the freedom to assemble, they may hold their meetings on the basis of these approved rules, methods and aims.

Associations which have names suggesting a religious character, but which have been granted permission to operate by the appropriate state body, can be considered Catholic associations only if they are accepted by the Catholic Church.

State bodies should not contribute to the working of associations with Catholic names.

Religious orders may also exist to assist the church in its operation. The individual religious orders may enjoy community life according to their own rules. They may freely maintain contact with their highest superiors, even if they reside abroad. Their field of endeavour, their means of subsistence, their social security all take place as laid down in an agreement signed with the relevant state bodies when the order began to function. If someone is a member of an order as a Hungarian citizen, he or she may take up work with non-church em-

ployers in accordance with the valid regulations (e.g. nursing the sick in hospital).

Church Press. The church has the right to make use of the tools of mass communication to ensure its own operation and to express its teaching. It may publish religious books without restriction. Similarly it may issue national, diocesan, and parish publications, and take responsibility for the launching of new church papers.

The planned law will probably affect the wide sphere of life that is related to religion, and deals with areas that universal church law also regulates.

For this reason, in the interest of bringing the two legal systems into harmony before publication, the Hungarian Catholic community feels it desirable that the Hungarian People's Republic and the Holy See harmonise their standpoints, whether through informal discussions, or — if possible — through a broader range of contact between the two sides, set up with the agreement of them both. Such an agreement might be a worthy preparation for, or suitable complement to, the law on religion.

Which Way to the Church?

Juris Rubenis, pastor of the Luther Church in Liepaja and lecturer at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Riga, is probably one of the best known clergymen in Latvia today. For several years he has been one of a group of younger Lutheran pastors trying to persuade the Latvian Lutheran hierarchy to adopt a more independent attitude towards the state and thus assist the present

process of renewal within the Latvian Lutheran Church.

Rubenis is a close friend of Modris Plate and Maris Ludviks, two popular and active clergymen who were dismissed in spring 1987 by the Lutheran Consistory at the demand of the state authorities. In protest at this, on 14 June 1987 Rubenis, Plate and 13 other Lutheran clergymen and theological lecturers formed a group